

ton's letter, and that I wrote without the sanction or even *knowledge*, of any member of the Committee, or any officer of the institution.

I shall feel obliged by your insertion of this in your next publication, and remain, Sir, your very obedient servant,

H. PIPER.

85, Aldersgate-street, Sept. 17, 1839.

THE CONCOURS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Your remarks on the necessity of introducing the concours as a test of the qualifications of candidates for medical chairs in our universities (*LANCET*, Aug. 24), must meet with the approval of every honest man who has turned his attention to the subject. I do not say that in every instance the concours would lead to the choice of the best man for such situations, for a *gabby body* might succeed while a more profound man might fail; but, at all events, the concours would infallibly exclude those who knew nothing of the subject to be taught.

Two teachers of forensic medicine have just been appointed in the University of Glasgow, one by the Crown, the other by the University; or, rather, one by a knot of political tricksters, and the other by a few foggy old Tories. Neither of the two nominees is understood to possess more than sufficient practical acquaintance with chemistry to enable them to perform the most simple analysis, far less to execute those laborious and difficult analyses, qualitative and quantitative, which are so frequently required in the practice of forensic medicine. How are these youths to teach what they do not understand? By taking a few lessons in a laboratory, I suppose, before they begin to deliver their lectures. They put me in mind of an army doctor, who, being ejected from the service for insolence and neglect of duty, actually applied to be made professor of oriental languages in one of our universities, and being asked by one of the patrons whether he knew the Hebrew language, answered, "No, but he really meant to learn it!" Such absurdities as these, at least, would be prevented by the concours, and students would be saved from the insult of attending a set of ignoramuses who pretend to teach what they themselves have never studied, and do not understand. I am, &c.,

ÆNEAS ROBERTSON.

Muslin-street, Paisley, Sept. 12, 1839.

WORKS IN PARTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—I am surprised that you, as censor *morum medicorum*, have not denounced the

breaches of faith of certain authors or publishers,* who advertise their intention of printing certain works in *parts*, within a certain time, and having then, by the presumed respectability of their names, insured a sufficient number of subscribers, discontinue the publication of the remainder of the books altogether. The subject is worthy of your pen; I will furnish you with the text. In the advertisement to the *first part* of the *second* volume of Dr. Arnott's "Elements of Physic," published by Messrs. Longman and Co., in 1829, there occurs the following paragraph:—

"The *second part* of volume the second, comprising electricity, magnetism, and astronomy, and *concluding* the work, will be put to press after the publication of the present part."

It is needless to say that the public have waited in vain until the year 1839, for the redemption of this pledge, and that the work still remains incomplete, although, from time to time, as in the advertisement sheet of Part I. of "Copland's Medical Dictionary," in the year 1832, we are informed that "the concluding part of vol. the second will be published in the course of the season."

Then, as to Dr. Copland's "Dictionary," the first part of which was published at the beginning of 1833, with a variety of pledges, which must be in the memory of your readers, and which it would be tedious to recapitulate; I will at once, therefore, refer to part the second, where we are informed that "part 3 will be published early in 1834." It was not published till April 1835! Part 3 informs us that "part 4 is *in the press*, and will be published *shortly*." It was published in 1837! and contained the following announcement *from the author*:—"The materials for the remaining parts are in such a state of forwardness as to induce the author to promise the 5th part in December next, and the *concluding* part in a few months after that." In May, 1838, more than a year after the fifth part was so positively promised, *half* of part 5 is published, with the following announcement:—"The author assures the subscribers that the materials for the remainder of the work are in such a state of forwardness as to enable him *henceforward* to bring out a half-part every three months until the whole is completed." If this pledge had been redeemed the work would have been completed nine months ago, but the public are still looking out for the *other* part of *part 5*! Whether they will ever get it is best known to the promising author and publishers. The whole affair is discreditable to them. I remain, Sir, yours, &c.

VERAX.

* Wrong. We have several times censured these breaches of faith.—ED. L.